

# SEEN IN THE WORLD OF ART

## OLD MASTERS BROUGHT TO TOWN BY VICTOR G. FISCHER.

Paintings by Century Club Members. Engravings by Durer, Etchings by Rembrandt, R. W. Van Borssele's Rembrandt Pictures at the Galleries.

It rather takes one's breath away when a stranger from Cosmopolis sails into Metropolis with as fine a cargo of art as may be encountered anywhere, and all this without any preliminary blaring of trumpets or banging of drums. When we say "stranger" we exaggerate, for Mr. Victor G. Fischer of Washington, D. C., can hardly be thus described. His name is known to every art amateur in the land as that of an indefatigable connoisseur whose galleries in the capital are always full of good things. Well, he has ascended upon New York as a stopping place for a period, the duration of which is not yet defined, and he occupies temporarily the Oehme Galleries on Fifth Avenue, in the centre of the art district. He has with him a part of his collection, nearly two score of paintings.

With the attributions of Mr. Fischer we will not quarrel. Most of them leap to the eye, some do not; but as attributions go he need have no regrets. If some imp of the perverse could change every attribution in his collection the pictures would be just as fascinating. There is a Rembrandt, the portrait of a woman with reddish hair, a canvas that shows not an iota of repainting. It may be of the period of 1630 or thereabout. A richly toned, ingratiating work this, and more Rembrandtish in quality than some famous examples we have seen. Of course Mr. Fischer has a pedigree for it, and of course it is irreproachable and also quite superfluous. If the picture doesn't spell beautiful art to your eyes then read your critical twaddle at home. The elaborate descriptions of pictures always recall to us those analyses of musical compositions that make weary the eyes and distract the sense of hearing at a symphony concert or at a music drama. People glue their optics on the printed page, and the music surges about them unheard. The child must be named, naturally; but a name doesn't make it any lovelier or more interesting—unless to unimaginative folk.

Any other dealer but this one would have contrived a name for the large "Adoration of the Magi," a fifteenth century composition full of good paint and character. It was exhibited in 1902 at Bruges, and the nearest attribution arrived at is the school of Quentin Matsy. Not to our notion quite an apposite one. There are passages in the work that by their bold rendering of jeweled stuffs have puzzled some Continental critics. One thing is certain and that is it is an extremely handsome picture. Hanging near by is a Lucas Cranach, "Hercules and the Daughters of Lycomedes," being portraits of the artist and his daughters. This is a sterling specimen of fifteenth century art excellently preserved. A favorite picture to our own taste is Gerard David (1460-1520), whose works may be seen at their best in Bruges, Brussels and Antwerp. The Fischer David is a "Descent from the Cross," suggesting a poignant feeling that makes the Italian painters of such sacred themes seem a little too ornamental and shallow in expressiveness if compared to the Flemish primitives. Austere music emanates from the canvases of David, a music as enlivened and as sorrowful as the pictured actions in the dramatic drama of the redemption.

El Greco is from the well known collection of Ivan Stokichin, Paris. It is entitled "Las Lagrimas de San Pedro" and is duly reported by Manuel B. Cossio in his monumental study. It is numbered 316 in the catalogue, though not reproduced among the illustrations that form the second volume. Probably the reason for this omission is the existence of another "Las Lagrimas de San Pedro" at Toledo in the collection of the Marquis de la Vega Inclan, though the Stokichin-Fischer example is not a replica, there being several variations. But both belong to the second epoch of his style, both show the same tears rolling down his cheeks, the same intense coloring and the coloring is vivid and eloquent. El Greco was fond of St. Peter. There is a noble figure in the Sacristia of the Escorial; in Toledo at the Museo Provincial there is another St. Peter, but of the last epoch. A Goya is the portrait of an Archbishop, probably that of Fray Miguel Fernandez (see Paul Lafond, "Goya," page 127), though Mr. Fischer does not state this in his little catalogue. It is from the collection of the Marquis de la Vega and is capital Goya.

An amazingly attractive portrait is that of Eleanor of Austria, wife of Philip I., King of France, by Mabuse, sometimes called Jan Gossaert (1472-1533). It holds the eye like a Holbein, and the brilliancy of the point is in no wise impaired by the flight of the years. By many it will be considered the clou of the collection, and the amiable Washingtonian collector is not to be blamed for going into ecstasies over this picture. The lady's eye haunts us, and the brilliancy of the blacks in conjunction with the decorative handling evokes something more than penitential admiration. Two Fragonards in the inner gallery are charming in sentiment and color. The Greuze is the portrait of the artist's daughter. Of the two Constables we prefer the smaller; the big one is as unlikely Constable as you could expect, though it has a history. We mean by this that it does not resoundingly recall the characteristic earmarks of the painter, and it is too large to convey the sense of charm. But it is an imposing composition, best suited to a museum. Another portrait which fills the eye pleasantly is by Bronzino, from the Hamilton Palace collection. It portrays Eleonora di Toledo, wife of Cosmo de Medici. There are certain old time portraits which, while they are not ranked with such giants as Titian, Velasquez, Raphael, nevertheless possess a personal interest, an intimate charm that sets them apart from the face painters. Bronzino is one, Antonio Moro another. A lovely Bacchiacca, Francesco Albertoni Ubertini, a young woman playing the mandolin, and a Marco Basaito, "Virgin and Saint," from the once celebrated Fontaine collection, are here. Where did Mr. Fischer gather all his art treasures? Cosmes (Gonzales), Pieter Codde, Old Crome, five Guardi, one of them the most monorous in color we have ever seen; a Jan Van Goyen, Leslie, an unusual landscape, a John Linnell Welsh landscape, two George Morlands, J. W. Muller, Patrick Nasmyth, Robert Huber, three portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Blotard, two fine Tiepolos, a Vigee Le Brun, two Van den Neer landscapes, a Richard Wilson, a David Wilkie, two portraits by Rubens, the latter "King David and the Elders of Israel of Nazareth" are pictures that fulfil your expectations.

# ART GOSSIP.

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The jury of selection for this exhibition is made up of these artists: William T. Smalley, Childs Hassam, J. Alden Weir, Irving R. Wiles, Henry B. Snell, J. Francis Murphy, Daniel Chester French, Herman A. MacNeil, Paul Dougherty, August Franzen, Howard Russell Butler, Bruce Crane, Carlton T. Chapman, Clifford Beal, Thomas W. Dewing, Montague Flagg, W. Granville-Smith, H. Bolton Jones, Sergeant Kendall, George W. Maynard, F. Louis Mora, Frederick J. Waugh, R. M. Shortell, E. M. Rehn, Leonard Ochtmann, Edward H. Potthast and Henry Prellwitz.

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The Architectural League is to have its twenty-fifth annual exhibition dinner in the galleries of the Fine Arts Building next Friday evening. The subject for discussion following the dinner will be "Government Art Commissions." Louis D. Vaillant is chairman of the dinner committee.

The Fakers Club in West Seventy-fourth street opened an exhibition of illustrations and commercial work on Tuesday, to continue for two weeks. According to the Fakers themselves the exhibition is highly interesting, they admit it in red and black announcements and invite people to come up and get acquainted. The number is 41. The judging committee accepted something more than a hundred of the two hundred drawings submitted.

Antonio Barone, a young painter who came here from Leroy, N. Y., has won his way among his fellow artists, who commend his work, and after spending the summer in Europe in work and study in the galleries and elsewhere he has returned to portrait painting more seriously than ever. Among the portraits at which he is engaged now are those of a daughter of the Countess de Cerkow, of Moscow, Francis Henderson, nephew of Eugene Kelly, and of Mlle Gaetane Britt, the harpist.

Milwaukee is now sharing in the increasing appreciation of art interest in art which is noticeable all over the country. The Milwaukee Art Society has through the cooperation of the American Federation of Art secured an exhibition of paintings, which opened on Tuesday, but the town bewails its lack of a suitable gallery. Even paintings owned by Milwaukee residents can't be shown in a loan exhibition owing to this lack, and Milwaukee eyes are turned enviously toward Minneapolis, where a few nights ago \$325,000 was raised in ninety minutes to build an art museum.

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Sir Walter Armstrong, writing in the *Guardian* of the present exhibition at the Royal Academy, London, says by way of beginning:

"I can imagine few better tests of power to appreciate art than to walk from Burlington House at the present moment to the Grafton Gallery and extract from the works of Frith on the one hand and Gauguin on the other what they have in common."

"Those who have bound their faith to the post-impressionists will deny of course that Frith and Gauguin have anything in common at all, and so will those who look upon the show now open in Grafton street as a joke or an impertinence. Gauguin is himself and Frith too would deny the imputation, probably in language which would not err from want of force."

"Also it is quite true that between their conscious and deliberate aims there is no point of contact. But after all what a painter intends is comparatively unimportant. The thing that counts is what his individual temperament compels him to do."

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# ART GOSSIP.

The Madison Art Galleries one of the picture movers, an experienced middle aged man, remarked to his companion: "That's a fine Twachtman." "It is," said the other chap, "and was he a great artist?" "He is, for he's dead. Like Indians the only good artists are the dead ones." Sound criticism this.

Robert W. Van Borssele possesses what the psychologists would describe as a massive personality; this does not necessarily include his corporeal frame, but alludes more particularly to his temperament, a red headed one. To be sure, he happens to be a large, broad shouldered man with well developed maxillaries and a tongue that can hold its own in a furious argument—especially over art. Indeed, the genial Robert usually plays solo in a linguistic combat, as he, like Whistler, never argues, but tells you a thing and it is so. We mention his personality because in these days when we draw correspondences are far fetched by writers in psychology the case of Van Borssele would prove either a singularly interesting or a singularly disappointing one, depending on the point of view. The truth is that this artist doesn't paint the least like his personality. You could fancy him a bawny hurler of paint at twenty paces, his canvas as rich and resonant as a hodman's palette, chanting at top voice: "I am the great North American autumn cyclone of color. Beware my burly brush, ye timid academicians!" Now nothing could be further from the truth than this appalling sketch.

Mr. Van Borssele belongs by artistic race and breeding to the Barbizons. As one of the few pupils of Wyant he shows a canvas that is almost a Wyant in its evocation of nocturnal atmosphere. His gentle, delicately colored landscapes are seldom disturbed by harsh gales. His warm sunlight bathes the slopes and valleys of Les Andelys. His rhythmic rivers meander through Vergilian meadows, and the ducks hug the long grasses, the sheep move languidly down the dusty roads. Last summer he painted much at Gandebe on Caux, Normandy, and several river views he brought back are characterized by the artist's devotion to decorative, well balanced composition, without slurring more obvious natural truths. He is affected by the charms of some green clogs, some island standing in full stream, with a lonely castle reared on the heights—as in his picture of the Chateau Gaillard. His sense for tree forms has been developed, and he has his favorite Rousseau. He has never done anything better than a group of trees, bulky in mass, set off by sharp, thin, ragged trees across a waterway.

Van Borssele's tendency to sentimentalize his landscapes to seek for the easiest line of resistance in their composition hardly obtrudes itself in his last batch of sketches and finished canvases. A certain Norman garden gay in the sunlight, with its multicolored flowers, ought to prove an attractive spring Academy picture. There is a white capped peasant woman who lurks at present behind the kitchen door. Perhaps by next March she will appear in this garden with flower slipping shears and make a brave spot of luminosity in the water scene. At the Scott & Fowler Galleries there is a large landscape of Van Borssele which is much admired.

What is really Mr. Ehrlich's first school exhibition of the season is the present one consisting of early Italian paintings. There are only a few over two dozen, but they show the result of loving selection. Such names as Bassano (Jacopo da Ponte), Boltraffio—which we missed, as the canvas was temporarily absent, but will be in place to-morrow Bonifazio, Bonisignori, Dal Bardi, Dosso Dossi, a lovely deep hued landscape, Franciabigio, portrait of a young man (Raphael), Francesco Furini, a gorgeous color mass, four Guards, one the splendid "Marriage of the Adriatic," Lorenzo Lotto, Moroni at school picture, but excellent, Mura, Naldini, Jacopo Palma, beautiful point, Piazza, Pontorno, a portrait of a philosopher, which might be advantageously studied by portraitists in search of decorative arrangements; Ambrogio de Predis (school of), Guido Reni, a sweet sleeping baby; Romanino, Rondinello, Jacopo Sellaio, an exquisitely rendered adoring Madonna, and a Marco Tiziano. The Bonisignori is a particularly happy exposition of dignified portraiture coupled with a sensuous color that with less artistic control might easily have degenerated into the lush and too expressive.

Too late for review are various exhibitions now in progress. At the Montross Gallery are pictures by Elliott Daingerfield; at the Cottier Galleries Gedney Bunce is on view; the American Society of Miniature Painters is at Knoedler's, as are the portraits of that brilliant and accomplished visitor from Paris Francois Fleming. Paintings by Henry B. Snell are at Macbeth's, and at the Haas Gallery drawings and paintings by Harry Berlin are exposed. In a word, there is plenty of art for plenty of people in this sad, bad, glad city of New York.

## A LAW UNTO HIS PATIENTS.

Paris Doctor Won Strange Bet Through Their Obedience.

One of the most successful physicians, at least in his hold on his patients, was David Gruby, who died in Paris in 1898. He was a Hungarian by birth, but had lived many years in the French capital. His methods of treatment, entirely logical in principle, were often highly original, not to say fantastic, in the form they took, yet it was to them in a great measure that he owed his remarkable vogue among the most intelligent classes of Paris.

His influence over his patients was such, says a writer in the *Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette*, that he was able as the result of a wager to induce some of the best known Parisians to walk up and down the Avenue des Champs-Elysees during a whole forenoon.

In accordance with his prescription each of these patients—lawyers, engineers, writers, dramatists, gentlemen of leisure—was to swallow a prune every ten meters while walking along the avenue, and this was carried out to the letter and with the utmost seriousness to the amazement of the fellow practitioners whom Gruby had invited to witness this singular therapeutic procedure.

One of his most distinguished patients, Alexandre Dumas, was said to have obtained great benefit from a green apple which he was instructed to eat every day under the Arc-de-Triomphe de l'Etoile after a walk of a given length.

## Healthy Sailors.

From the *Blue Jacket*.

The health of the navy was better in 1909 than in any other yearly period of the last decade, and the death rate was the lowest ever recorded for that arm of the fighting services, according to the annual report of the Surgeon General of the Navy.

The recorded death rate was five per thousand. The percentage of sick from disease and injuries was 4.69, as compared with the ten year average of 5.218. The Surgeon General records that the entire personnel under 50 years of age be vaccinated against typhoid fever.

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# WILLIAM PENN AT 22, BY CHARLES M. SHEAN.

Painted for the Pennsylvania Society and Exhibited at Its Annual Dinner Last Evening at the Astor, After the Philadelphia Historical Society's Portrait of 1660—Presented by Andrew Carnegie.



Photo by E. S. Bennett.

whatever it may be, may instructively compare Frith's Pope and Lady Wortley Montagu with certain interiors recently exhibited by our younger painters of the New English Art Club. The whirling of time is complete and the resemblance striking.

An exhibition as agreeable as it is unusual has attracted the attention of friends of members of the Colony Club since last Tuesday. The exhibition closes to-day. Tuesday was reserved for members, but thereafter a number of guests had the pleasure of seeing what the women had brought together in an art display of a wholly different order from what the clubs of the city have been in the habit of indulging. It is a loan exhibition in the assembly room called simply a representation of "A Colonial Interior," but really a rather comprehensive exhibition of works of art and artisanship which were available in Colonial times.

The women who arranged it assembled some very handsome Chippendale furniture, drawing to some extent upon collections represented in the Walpole Society, and they secured from other collections some Chinese rugs of the period upon which to rest it. A few Chinese porcelains and their quota of grace and chromatic beauty to the adornment of this interior. Mirrors with intricate gilded frames, natural accompaniments of Chippendale furniture, further establish the room, and there is interesting English furniture of earlier date, representative of the days of transition from the Flemish to the Dutch styles, which later gave way to the influences under which the more refined Chippendale productions came into being.

A portrait of Mrs. Samuel Blodgett and child, by Gilbert Stuart; portraits of Thaddeus Burr and wife, by John Singleton Copley; portraits by Reynolds, Gainsborough and Hoppner and a three-quarter length of Lady Hamilton as Miranda, by Romney, are there. Among other objects that contribute to the interest of the exhibition are a Windsor writing chair with a large desk arm, drawers and candle holder; a six legged highboy; a group of American silver teapots, including one designed by Paul Revere, and an invitation written by Dolly Madison to dine with the President.

The ladies who arranged the exhibition have been the recipients of genuine congratulations. It may still be seen to-day by those having cards.

The copy of the portrait of William Penn in the Historical Society's gallery at Philadelphia which was made by Charles M. Shean of this city for Andrew Carnegie, who presented it to the Pennsylvania Society of New York, was exhibited at the Pennsylvania Society's annual dinner at the Hotel Astor last evening. The portrait is reproduced on this page. At the left of the canvas the right of Penn's head, it is inscribed:

July 22 1666  
October 14

At the other side of the head the canvas bears the inscription:

Pax Quasiens  
Bello

This may have been intended to be "Pax Quasiens Bello" the original portrait was painted 244 years ago by a painter whose name is not now known and meant to carry the signification

"Peace comes through war." The young Penn, at 22, as may be seen in the reproduction, does not suggest the future proprietor of the Quaker domain beyond the Delaware, but he is depicted as a clean cut and doubtless fashionable young man, with indications of plenty of go in him.

Felix Isman of Philadelphia, who has been known as a buyer of a modest number of costly canvases of the Barbizon painters which come under the classification important, has decided to sell all those pictures in his collection. He owns only twenty-five of them, but these include three large decorative paintings and a pastel by Millet, and canvases of note by Bail, Cazin, Isabey, Dupré and Corot among others. Mr. Isman has resolved to dispose of his paintings at auction in this city next month that he may be enabled to devote his energies as a collector hereafter to the acquisition of etchings by the old masters.

## WILD DUCK ON BRITISH COAST.

As Many as 30 or 40 Killed by Single Shot From a Snipe Gun.

From the *London Daily Mail*. Wild duck, which have entirely avoided many inland spots where a few are usually seen at the season, have appeared in very great quantities along some of their seaside haunts, especially on the east coast of England and the north of Ireland.

The pursuers of the strange sport of punt gunning have had remarkable experiences. Slipping about in their punt draws, they have come upon flocks so great that a single shot from the great swivel gun, which is almost a cannon, has bagged more than the longshore sportsman could get in a week. Fifty and sixty have been killed at a shot, though the marksmen for the shot may have taken a week or so.

Numbers of duck again have been killed in the more formal, artificial shoots of Lincolnshire, Hertfordshire and other places where the birds are now bred almost as scientifically as pheasants.

A sportsman's bird that seems to increase in numbers and to widen its range is the golden plover, of which numbers are now to be seen in the poulterers' shops of the West End. These plovers, which are held by some to be the best bird that comes to table, are seen frequently all over the country. They have been observed in swarms over grass fields in the home counties, as well as in their more normal haunts among the wild places of the coast.

Another bird that appeared at one moment in great quantity was the black duck, of which large numbers were shot over the coast of Norfolk from boats. But he is a brave or very hungry man who would dare to face the bird at table.

## Just in Time.

An Arkansas judge had convened court at one of the two law offices, when it was found that no pens, ink or paper had been provided, and upon inquiry it came out that no county funds were available for the purpose.

The judge exclaimed somewhat facetiously: "I had drawn some money from the bank. He was about to hand it to the clerk when a visiting lawyer, a high priced imported article brought out to defend a case of some importance, spoke up in an aside plainly audible over the room."

"Well, with infinite contempt, I've seen some pretty bad conditions, but this, well, this is the limit."

You are fined \$5 for contempt, sir," thundered the judge. "Hand the money to the clerk."

When the eminent lawyer had humbly complied the judge turned to the clerk: "Now, Mr. clerk, go out and get what pens, ink and paper the court may require, and if there is any change left over you may give it to the gentleman."

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